unaffordable for many across the country. Written prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be interesting to see an updated version or future research that examines how our current situation has deepened existing gender inequalities in access to reproductive rights and abortion in Australia.

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doi [10.1017/qre.2020.20](https://doi.org/10.1017/qre.2020.20)

Brian Walker, *Finding Resilience: Change and Uncertainty in Nature and Society*, Melbourne: CSIRO Publishing, 2019, 157 pp., ISBN 9 7814 8631 0777, A\$43.75.

I first encountered Walker's work on resilience when I was a novice researcher in human geography, coming to terms with our failure to mitigate climate change in a timely enough way, and needing something other than mitigation or adaptation to think with. A little over a decade later, I approached Walker's new book with some hesitation. I have grown worried that resilience places too much importance on strength or robustness, and is insufficiently attentive to what is valuable but intrinsically vulnerable – beings, relations, systems, that cannot be made resilient, but are nonetheless worthy of existence. I also loathe how the term can deflect attention away from the causes of ecological and social harm, busying us with the ever-intensifying task of coping with increasing onslaughts, instead of dismantling the structures causing them.

Walker almost immediately won me over with the concluding sentence of his first chapter: 'There are limits to humanity's resilience' (2019: 11). Walker is precise and critical in his use of the term, not over-stretching its usefulness. A resilient system isn't one that 'bounces back' to a prior state, he argues, but one that learns and reorganises itself in response to disturbance, improving its overall adaptive capacity without changing its core functions. He reminds us that resilience is not always positive – some invasive species are frustratingly resilient to efforts to manage them, and some harmful systems are troublingly resilient to transformation. Walker's book refreshes resilience, revisiting how we have come to understand it, clarifying its usefulness in thinking about socio-ecological systems.

The book is organised in five parts. Part 1 comprises introductory matter and scene-setting. Part 2 describes resilience in natural systems, what it is and the history of its formulation in ecological research, addressing familiar ecological concerns like keystone species, interconnectedness, disturbance and diversity. This is perhaps Walker at his best – he is, after all, an ecologist, and his love of and fascination with the natural world are contagious. Part 3 considers resilience in human systems, beginning with more individual, psychological understandings of resilience before considering how resilience operates on the scale of communities. Part 4 attempts to synthesise Parts 2 and 3, and Walker grapples more explicitly with questions of inequality, inequity and the role of economic systems in ecological harm. Part 5 outlines 'a way forward'. Throughout, the writing is engaging, accessible to a

general audience and pleasurable to read. Walker is a great storyteller, and he illustrates the concepts under discussion with interesting, charming and thought-provoking accounts from his own and his colleagues' experiences in the field.

There are a couple of conceptual points that gave me some pause. First, although Walker frequently invokes stories about specific practices in different parts of the world, the tenor of his arguments tends back towards universalism, flattening out social difference into an expansive 'we'. Expansionism and over-consumption have been common behaviours in human societies, but they have not been universal. This narrative erases millennia of ecologically sound land management by First Nations people here in so-called Australia, as just as one example. He extends this 'we' into Malthusian arguments about population growth, but humans live in vastly different ways. Some ways of living do little to no serious ecological harm, and some are socially and ecologically catastrophic. It is unarguably true that the world cannot support seven billion people who live like me – a middle-class white woman residing in a big Australian city. But the problem is not that there are too many people: it is that I consume more than my fair share. The 'we' Walker tends to invoke – just like the 'anthro' in Anthropocene – obfuscates longstanding racial and colonial dynamics (in which the study of ecology has also often been complicit, or has perpetuated) and the specific political-economic relations causing global environmental crises. This matters, because we have to understand what is causing the onslaught if we are to effectively address it. Walker hints at this, and at times talks explicitly about the impact of the western world, economic rationalism and neoliberalism, but it is inconsistently done, and seems to slide out of his focus when considering population. Walker is not alone; population is often foregrounded in conversations about sustainability, resilience and climate change. However, we ought to be wary about how these views may be taken up in unintended ways to serve dangerous political agendas. How we live, rather than how many of us should live, is a question that better reflects the true underlying causes of ecological catastrophe and climate change.

With that rather heavy caveat, *Finding Resilience* is an engaging work by a true leader in socio-ecological resilience, rich with compelling and often beautiful stories, with a lot to recommend it to a general and broad audience.

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